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KENYAN FISHERMAN IMPROVES HIS LIVELIHOOD AND FAMILY WELLBEING THROUGH MODIFIED BASKET TRAPS AND TRAINING

By Christopher Cheupe, Joaquim Mwaganda, and Andrew Wamukota

Jamaa, a fisherman in his early 30's from the coastal region in Kenya, started fishing while he was in primary school and has been engaged in fishing ever since. He is married and has seven children to provide for. Unfortunately, artisanal fishing, which is the main profession for the coastal communities of Kenya, has recently faced challenges due to declining fish stock from the use of destructive fishing methods, which negatively impact the environment.

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Fish activity called *Samaki Salama* (which means "safe fish" in Kiswahili) aimed to promote sustainable fisheries and help restore hope for people like Jamaa who are dependent on fishing for their livelihood. The activity accomplished this through the provision of modified fishing traps, which are not only easy to use but also environmentally friendly by catching only larger fish, so smaller fish can continue to grow and produce offspring. Moreover, the activity employed a social marketing strategy that provided the fishermen with information about the importance of catching mature fish for sustainable fishing and as an avenue to increase their income.

Jamaa and his wife (both activity participants) display their goats in Kokotoni Village. (Photo by Christopher Cheupe)

Jamaa has been commended by villagers, the local Beach Management Unit (BMU), and fisheries officials for the tremendous progress he has made thanks to his improved fishing efforts since receiving his fishing traps. He attributes his success to the implementation of the Samaki Salama activity. His livelihood and the wellbeing of his family has been changed for the better.

"I am happy because the basket traps from Samaki Salama have enabled me to earn good money to cater to my family's needs," Jamaa said. "I have been able to pay my children's school fees, and I also take more fish home to eat, so they will be healthier."

When the Samaki Salama team followed up with fishermen to collect their fish catch data after using the modified fish traps, they found Jamaa had made further progress toward an increased income for him and his family.

"With the money obtained from fishing, I have been able to buy two goats, which are both pregnant and will increase the number of my herd," he said.

Using the basket traps from Samaki Salama has enabled Jamaa to diversify his income sources. As his goat

herd multiplies, he will be able to sell them in the future to provide further for his family's needs. While many fishers like Jamaa do not earn enough income to save, activities like those implemented by Samaki Salama demonstrate how improved fishing methods can boost fishers' income, help them reinvest in their livelihoods, and mitigate the effects of unexpected shocks in the future.

Jamaa's and other participants' success through being a part of Samaki Salama's training workshop and using the modified baskets traps shows that the sustainable solution is not only better for the planet but also for Kenyan fishers.

Note: Jamaa is a pseudonym out of respect for the participant's privacy.

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ABOUT THE FISH INNOVATION LAB

The Fish Innovation Lab supports the United States Agency for International Development's agricultural research and capacity building work under Feed the Future, the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative. Mississippi State University is the program's management entity. The University of Rhode Island, Texas State University, Washington University in St. Louis, and RTI International serve as management partners.

www.feedthefuture.gov
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This story was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Feed the Future initiative. The contents are the responsibility of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Fish and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.